

Synopsis of Ferguson

Ferguson discloses a communication switching network, which includes a transfer point 18 for connecting and routing calls between a plurality of switching points 16. An originating switching point initiates a call for a destination switching point by sending a query to the transfer point. In response to the query, the transfer point determines whether an overload condition exists at the destination switching point. Ferguson discloses that this determination is based on a number of queries it receives for the destination switching point. If an overload condition is detected, the transfer point will send a query response to the originating switching point indicating a time interval during which call queries for the destination switching point should be sent.

Claimed Features Not Taught by Ferguson

As amended, independent claim 1 recites receiving a message blocking request from a first network component at a second network component to prevent messages from being communicated from a third network component to the first network component. Ferguson fails to disclose this feature.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner reads Ferguson as disclosing a destination switching point as the claimed first network component, a transfer point as the claimed second network component, and an originating switching point as the claimed third network

component. In Ferguson, there is no disclosure of the transfer point receiving any type of message blocking request from the destination switching point. In Ferguson, the transfer point prevents calls from being directed by the originating switching point to the destination switching point based on an overload condition determined by the transfer point itself. Therefore, Ferguson fails to disclose that the second network component receives a message blocking request from the first network component, and prevents messages from being communicated to the first network component if the message blocking request is accepted, as required by independent claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable for the reasons set forth above. Further, Applicant submits that claims 2-8 and 17 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-16 and 18

Claims 9-16 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferguson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,978,672 to Hartmaier et al. (hereinafter Hartmaier). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

As amended, independent claim 9 recites receiving a message blocking request from a first mobile switching center (MSC) to a system

control function component (SCF), and preventing messages from being communicated from a second MSC identified in the message blocking request to the first MSC. Applicant submits that Ferguson and Hartmaier, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose this feature.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner admits that Ferguson does not teach that his disclosed switching points can be MSCs (see page 6 of the Office Action of October 24, 2002). The Examiner relies upon the teachings of Hartmaier to remedy this deficiency. Accordingly, the Examiner presumably interprets the transfer point of Ferguson as teaching the claimed SCF, and Ferguson's destination switching point as teaching the claimed first MSC.

As discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, Ferguson fails to disclose that the transfer point receives a message blocking request from the destination switching point. Rather, Ferguson discloses that the transfer point makes its own determination as to whether the destination switching point is overloaded and should not receive calls. Accordingly, Ferguson fails to disclose the step of receiving a message blocking request from the first MSC at the SCF, as required by claim 9. Hartmaier fails to provide any disclosure, which remedies this deficiency.

For the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 9 is allowable. Further, Applicant submits that claims 10-16 and 18 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency

on claim 19. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, reconsideration of the various rejections and allowance of claims 1-18 is respectfully requested.

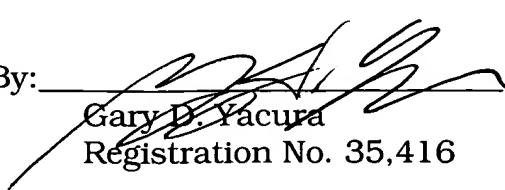
In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact Jason Rhodes at (703) 668-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss this application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE IN THE

CLAIMS

The following is a marked up version of each amended claim in which underlines indicate insertions and brackets indicate deletions.

1. (Twice Amended) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

[sending] receiving a message blocking request from a first network component [to] at a second network component, the message blocking request identifying a third network component; and

preventing messages from being communicated from the third network component to the first network component if the second network component accepts the message blocking request based on an evaluation of the communication system.

9. (Twice Amended) A method for controlling messages in a communication system, comprising the steps of:

[sending] receiving a message blocking request from a first mobile switching center (MSC) [to] at a system control function component (SCF), the message blocking request identifying a second MSC; and

preventing messages from being communicated from the second MSC to the first MSC.